EDITOR'S CHOICE

At the Christmas party

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Welcome to the *BMJ*'s Christmas party. Back after a few years' absence are the orthopaedic surgeons—boy were those guys *animals* in the old days (*BMJ* 1988;297:1638-9). Now they're flexing their muscles while attempting erudite jokes at the expense of the anaesthetists (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7506). One of these turns on the difference between a joist and a girder (punchline: Joyce wrote *Ulysses*, Goethe wrote *Faust*).

James Joyce clearly doesn't get the joke, but he says it's given him an idea. Anything to take his mind off his new glasses (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7464). Perhaps he can be coaxed into talking with the dead of Ambridge (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7518), who are hunched over the hostess trolley, picking Jellyatrics (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7447) out of the icecream.

The other Irishman at the party is in a bad way (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7597). He's over 8 feet tall and keeps muttering about being locked up in a feckin museum. It's lucky John Hunter hasn't show up this evening, otherwise there really would have been blood on the walls. That would have made Occam's night (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7769). Always on the lookout for a spot of aggro, he's waving his razor threateningly about. You'd suspect he'd find something in common with the other ex-monk among the guests (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7769).

As you'd expect, Sherlock Holmes is keeping a close professional eye on these events (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7406). A regular he may be, but his unrepentant pipesmoking is really getting up people's noses.

Brian Jones and Kurt Cobain are in a corner trying to agree a variant of Groucho Marx's claim that he didn't want to be a member of any club that would have him as a member (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7406). Nevertheless, they seem slightly miffed that Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison haven't shown up.

A bored Amy Winehouse strays over to Beethoven, who clearly can't hear a word she's saying (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7589). A fruitless discussion about high notes ensues. The Physicians from the Hospital for Consumption (despite their name, not a rock group) are asking if anyone's brought any cod liver oil (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7505).

Earlier on there had been a scuffle in the hall, and the sound of gruff male voices. Hints of a Manchester accent? A discarded syringe was found, but later testing showed that it had contained only hydrocortisone (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7732).

Everyone is avoiding party bore, Ivar Ingimundarson, the Icelandic poet who's going on and on about how his brother ran off with his fiancée (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7826). Everyone that is except Eysteinn, known as The King in Norway, if not in Memphis. Neither has a clue who Bjork is.

Richard Smith is halfway through a monologue on the evils of denying death—largely redundant for this crowd (doi:10.1136/bmj.d8008). Those few for whom death remains a live issue are being stalked by the grim reaper, circling the periphery at a steady 1.8 mph (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7679).

Oblivious to the threat, first time invitees Waldemar Ingdahl (doi:10.1136/bmj.d8101) and Steve Reed (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7828) are deep in conversation. It seems they're plotting a mashup of *Pirates of the Caribbean* and *Lisa of Lambeth*, provisionally entitled *Pirates of Lambeth*. Kurt Cobain seems a shoo-in for the Johnny Depp role, although whether they ask Beethoven to write the score hasn't been decided yet. Some found his *Fidelio* way too heavy.

Unusually, it's been an alcohol free event this year—doubly a shame as the Dutch party food is oversalted (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7352). Continuing the continental theme, this year's party entertainer is Italian. She's performing some complicated manoeuvres involving her arms, to general amazement (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7653). Still, it makes a change from magicians pulling coins out of your mouth (*BMJ* 2009;339:b5066).

The last word goes to Joseph Crabtree, who appropriately, given the occasion, doesn't technically exist (doi:10.1136/bmj.d7769) "No set of mutually inconsistent observations can exist for which some human intellect cannot conceive a coherent explanation, however complicated," he mumbles. And then he passes out.

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